

Too Far Gone

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Too Far Gone by TheWeirdOneL

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Alternate Universe - Richie and Beverly are criminals, F/M, Fluff and Angst, M/M, and ben knows, and beverlys in love with ben, and richie and beverly get into some DEEP SHIT, and richies in love with eddie, and the loves of their lives are like NA, and they do some SHIT, and they fuck up a little bit, and they want them and all of their losers safe, but the losers ARENT HAVING IT, but the others dont know, in which richie and beverly want to protect the loves of their lives, ofc cause im reddie trash, summary:

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Henry Bowers's Gang (IT), Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, The Losers Club (IT)

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough/Stamley Uris, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

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Summary:

Richie Tozier thinks he loves Eddie Kaspbrak and Beverly Marsh knows she loves Ben Hanscom: and they're teenagers, and they're confused, and it doesn't help that Richie and Beverly are Derry's biggest criminals yet. It doesn't help at all.

Then things start really hitting the fan, and Richie and Beverly have to decide whether it's worth it to put the people they love in danger just so they can be together, or if it's finally time for them to leave Derry behind and never look back.

When a sprained ankle and a suspicious mother sets the clock ticking,

the Losers are going to have to find out how to save their bestfriends before they're too far gone.

1. Partners In Crime

Author's Note:

So I had this idea and I just couldn't help myself (I should really be doing history coursework fml)

In a nutshell: Richie and Beverly as Badass™ criminals + angst

I hope you enjoy it! This chapter isn't too long but it's gonna get pretty spicy pretty quickly (;
(This is honestly just a background of the characters and how they met)

(Also the summary is just an extract from a later part of the fic because I'm too excited to post this like right here right now to make a good enough summary lmao)

Derry had been a peaceful, crime-free town until Richie Tozier and Beverly Marsh were born. Armed robberies were unheard of, kidnappings were non-existent, and the concept of murder was practically a myth in Derry, ever since the killing of a young woman in the early 18th century. And that alone was a complete accident, one that never happened again. For years they had been proud to call themselves the “sleepy town of Derry”, and even though some argued it was boring, the people of the town wore that title like medals upon their chest. Everything changed after 1976: the year Richie and Beverly were born. It was like fate that they were both born in March in the same hospital - as though they were destined to be partners in crime. Of course, their crimes didn't begin until they were both 9, when they met one night running from different people of the same circumstance. That's not to say that young Richie and Beverly kidnapped or murdered anyone - at least, not when they were 9, and definitely not intentionally - they just did things that were completely taboo and highly illegal in their very strict town. Even at the age of 9, the lives they led meant survival was only possible if they did things they weren't allowed to do. It was this mutual survival mechanism they shared that made them “ride or die” best friends almost instantly, and they truly caused hell in their little town.

It frustrated the mayor of Derry to no end; he was an old man and had been Mayor during the peaceful days, and absolutely nothing could explain the change he witnessed over the years. The two, though they committed every crime they possibly had to, were never caught. Not a single person in Derry ever knew who they were: no one knew the names of the 'two scoundrels who terrorised our town', nor their ages, nor even their true appearances. Like every other student, they went to Derry middle school, and then high school, and until they met what would become the greatest friends they would ever make, not a single student or teacher ever knew about them or suspected them. Richie Tozier was just the trashmouth who never spoke about his family and Beverly Marsh was the "town slut" who hated everyone except Richie. They were best friends and outcasts - that was all anyone ever knew, and Richie and Beverly were happy to keep it that way. It was all they wanted; a world where it was just Richie and Beverly. Beverly and Richie. Partners in crime, best friends, loners.

Then Freshman year came around, and all of that changed when they met Bill Denbrough outside of school one day after detention while he was being beaten to shreds by Henry Bowers. Bill Denbrough was a quiet boy - a quiet boy who stuttered every sentence and lost his little brother during Middle school and that was the extent of the knowledge most people had on him. Bill only had two other friends - little Eddie Kaspbrak who everyone knew as the weird hypochondriac with two fanny packs, and Stanley Uris, the curly-haired Jewish boy who Henry Bowers and his group of bullies loved to torment. Richie and Beverly liked them, in a way, because they were like themselves: lonely kids who didn't want any trouble, and just wanted to get through each day happy and together. Perhaps it was that reason that, as Bill Denbrough fell on the ground in front of them and smacked his head hard against the ground, Richie ran to the boy's side and made sure he was okay while Beverly walked up to Henry and punched him so hard in the face that his nose broke and he fell to the floor crying. That day Richie and Beverly took Bill back to Bill's house and patched up all of his bruises and cuts, and the whole time they were actually happy being around a new person because Bill would either be joking or constantly thanking them and unlike every other person the two of them met, he didn't once look at them like they were the troublemaker and town slut. They were just Richie

and Beverly, the two kids who Bill recognised from his Maths and English class. And the next day, out of nowhere, Bill said hi to them, and asked them to join him for lunch. Richie, being the curious boy he was, dragged Beverly and followed Bill to his table and suddenly they were meeting Eddie and Stan and suddenly everything was flipped upside down.

To say that Richie liked Eddie from the moment he met him would be an understatement. The second he sat down with Beverly by his side Eddie gave them a smile that could've won national awards and Richie was completely smitten. He was the cutest boy Richie had ever met and when he opened his mouth he had Richie melting into the floor because he said, in the smallest but most genuine voice, "Thanks for saving Big Bill." He wasn't the only one, because even though Beverly hadn't liked a soul on earth except for her trashmouth best friend she felt a newfound love for the smaller boy of the three because when her fingernails tapped on the table he instantly complimented her nail polish with a look of awe on his face. Then to make it even better, quiet Stanley Uris, who had just watched bemused with Bill by his side, nodded in agreement and said, "the blue makes your eyes look really pretty," and Beverly had never heard a lovelier compliment from another person like that before. And Bill agreed with a stutter and a happiness in his eyes that had Beverly hooked on these boys in the same way she had been the night she met Richie. Before they even saw it happening they were returning to that same table again and again each day, and suddenly they were on nickname basis, and Richie was constantly pinching Eddie's cheeks and Beverly was always talking to Stan and Bill about the books they were reading, and it felt normal. It felt so right that sometimes they would forget about the real world, about who they made themselves, because the people they were with their new friends were the people they truly wanted to be. And sometimes, it felt like that was who they actually were.

Neither of them could say they hated it. Before Bill Denbrough, the two thought they would always be alone. That until they died it would always be Richie Tozier and Beverly Marsh versus the world. And it still was, to an extent, because as time drew on and suddenly they became the Losers club and they called each other best friends, both Beverly and Richie knew they could never drag those three into

their world. They could never let them know of the things they'd done the days before they met them and the things they would continue to do just to survive. Even as they swore to be friends forever, and to never let anything get in between them, an unspoken word between the two was that they would never, under any circumstances, tell them who they really were. And they managed to keep that secret all the way through until they were Seniors and they met Ben Hanscom and Mike Hanlon and all at once things got a lot more difficult than they had ever been.

Mike Hanlon and Ben Hanscom were geniuses, it was only natural that they would've been the first to know. Ben was a transfer, who moved miles from his old home to come live in the town of Derry with his parents, and Mike was a homeschooled boy who worked on a farm with his family. Both of them were library nuts; every chance they got they would be at the library, researching the town's history because Mike loved history and Ben just loved reading. They became friends quick, weeks before Ben and eventually Mike met the Losers club. Mike told Ben everything about his home life, and about his farm, because Ben was always interested. So naturally, when the day came that Mike - in the late hours of the night - went out into the chicken coop because he heard a noise and saw two people clad in black and a glimpse of ginger hair and a lanky body, Ben was the first he told. And Ben, having seen something familiar at his school, told him not to tell anyone because he thought he knew who it was and he wanted to find out himself first. That was how at the age of 17 Ben Hanscom met Beverly Marsh and fell in love with her, and then met Richie Tozier and found out he was the sweetest trashmouth in the world, and things started to get very very complicated.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hope you all enjoyed!

Comments are appreciated <3

2. Ben Knows

Notes for the Chapter:

I wasn't entirely happy about this chapter? But it's long, and it's got some cute stuff, and it's just setting up for the whole amount of fuckery that's about to happen next chapter lmao.

Hope you enjoy!! <3

It had been a few months since Ben Hanscom joined the Losers club, and for every day of every month he could never look at Beverly and Richie like everyone else did. Ben knew things he knew he wasn't supposed to know about the two; things he knew he should've told the others about but just couldn't bring himself to. He was scared of them, if he had to be truly honest. Beverly made his heart flutter and Richie was a kind boy who swore a lot and made stupid jokes, but they terrified him because she was ginger and he was lanky and they sounded exactly like the two criminals Mike had seen on his farm that one night. Sometimes he just couldn't believe it, because as he grew closer to Beverly he realised she had a heart as soft as wool and as he spent more time around Richie he realised the boy was just too harmless to be as harmful as the papers said. So whenever he saw a speck of ginger or a person who was lanky like Richie he prayed to himself that it was them, and not the two friends he had grown to love in just those few months.

He hated to admit it, but sometimes he could see it. Some days they would miss school together, and they would come back with bruises and cuts all over them that they would try to hide but Ben would always notice. Some nights, when it was really late and Ben couldn't sleep, he would look out of his window and sometimes he would see Beverly walking past towards Richie's house, or away from Richie's house. They never told the Losers exactly how they met, no matter how much any of them begged to hear the story, and they never told anyone about their families. The weirdest thing was that, while all of them had already been to Ben's house, he found out that not a single one of them had ever been to Richie's or Beverly's. They knew where they lived, but no one ever made it past the front door.

Ben was smart enough to know that it was probably them, no matter how badly he didn't want them to be the criminals his parents would warn him about when he stayed out late. But even though Ben knew that, he could never bring himself to tell anyone. He loved Beverly and Richie. So all he ever did about it was visit Mike's farm and keep him updated, and everytime he left he always made Mike swear not to tell anyone about his friends and oddly enough Mike always agreed. Then everything sort of collapsed when one day Ben came round to tell him about school and about his friends and Mike, out of nowhere, said "I wanna meet them," and suddenly Ben was rushing back into school the next day - the last day before the October holiday - telling them all they wanted him to meet his friend. He was scared about what Mike might do, but he invited them all anyway and they all agreed. The next day they were riding their bikes to Mike's farm, and only Ben saw the way Richie and Beverly's faces dropped as it came into view.

"Is your friend a cow?" Richie said as he dropped his bike, climbed up on the fence, and started mooing loudly at the cattle in the field. Both him and Beverly had regained their composure, putting on the same clueless smiles the other Losers had on their faces. Beverly laughed, and pushed Richie so hard he toppled over the side of the fence and into the water trough. Richie screamed so loud that the door of the house opened and Mike rushed out from inside the house to see what was going on.

"Hey! What's going- Oh, Ben, hey" Mike started shouting, but as he saw Ben he stopped and calmed down. Ben chuckled nervously as him and Mike shared a knowing glance as they looked at each other, and then towards Beverly and Richie. Ben could hear Mike's breath hitch, and he saw the way Richie and Beverly's faces turned into complete shock for just a second before they both smiled bashfully.

"Sorry man, *someone* pushed me into your cow water," Richie grumbled, giving a glare to an innocent-looking Beverly as he pulled himself up back over the fence and began shaking off the water like a wet dog. Eddie grimaced as droplets of dirty water fell on his skin, but instantly regretted making a noise as Richie turned his attention towards him and gave him a mischievous smile. "Hey, Eds. Do you want a hug?" he said, eyes innocent as he opened his arms up and

approached Eddie.

“Get the fuck away from me,” Eddie warned, breaking into a run as Richie approached him faster. Beverly sighed and shook her head as Bill laughed and Stan called for them all to come back and ‘be more fucking polite’. Ben was too nervous to laugh or roll his eyes or do anything except look at Mike for confirmation. He needed to know if it was them - if Richie and Beverly were the ones who broke into his chicken coop. Mike looked over at him, nodded his head inconspicuously, and then put a big smile on his face and invited them all inside while Richie continued running after Eddie.

As they sat down on the couches in front of the fire Bill was the first to speak as he said, “S-sorry about them, R-Richie doesn’t know how t-to act in f-front of others.” Mike waved it off and laughed, looking out of the window at the two boys who were still running around the front yard.

“It’s no bother, Ben already told me what to expect,” Mike responded with a heartfelt laugh, “My name’s Mike, by the way. Ben already told me all of your names. Would you guys like something to drink?” Ben was just about to shoot up out of his seat to offer to help before Beverly beat him to it.

“We’ll have coffee, but let me help,” she said, and Mike nodded with a small smile and they disappeared into the kitchen together before Ben could even process what was happening. He knew he couldn’t follow, so instead he sat nervous on the edge of his seat while Bill and Stan were looking out of the window and laughing as Eddie punched Richie in the gut and started to run like a madman towards the house.

In the kitchen Beverly closed the door behind her and let out a long, deep sigh, as though she were letting out every single ounce of oxygen she’d ever breathed in her life. Mike did the same, and couldn’t bring himself to move as he leaned up against the counter and looked towards Beverly. She looked over to him, and the smile she’d had on earlier was replaced with a look of annoyance.

“Seriously, Mike?” she hissed quietly, walking over to sit on the counter opposite him. Mike didn’t say anything but he felt like

everything was collapsing around him. He knew this was going to happen, but the weight of it all didn't hit him until now. "We've known each other for how long now? And you couldn't tell us that you knew Ben Hanscom? Our Ben Hanscom? The one we told you about numerous times before?"

"Look, I know, but- fuck, it's complicated, alright?" Mike said, looking up at Beverly and giving her a small frown. She huffed, and looked towards the door as Richie walked in - dripping water everywhere - and gave them both a big smile. "Long time no see, Mikey," he said, and walked over with his arms wide open and Mike flinched back and laughed.

"There's spare clothes in my bedroom upstairs, Rich," he said, putting his hands up to keep distance. Richie groaned and leaned up against the wall besides Beverly, and suddenly his mood took a complete U-turn. "Later," he said, and eyed Mike with the same annoyance that Beverly displayed.

There was silence, and just as Richie was about to speak Mike beat him to it.

"Ben knows," he said, because he didn't know what else to say. There was so much to tell them but this had been killing him for ages and if he didn't say it now he would never say it. Beverly's mouth fell wide open while Richie started choking on his own spit - none of them could speak as Mike's eyes fell to the floor. "I told him, before I really knew you guys, and he recognised you from school."

"Are-Are you- Are you fucking kidding me?!" Richie shouted, and Beverly had to slam her hand onto his mouth and shush him. Mike cringed, and looked at the door expecting someone to come in after Richie's outburst. A few moments passed, and no one did. Richie swatted Beverly's hands away and ran his fingers through his hair in exasperation.

"Shit, this is so fucking bad," Beverly said, rubbing her temples with her eyes squeezed shut. "Has he told anyone, the cops or anything?" she said, and she felt a pang in her chest because Ben Hanscom was a sweet boy who genuinely liked his friends and she couldn't bare to think of him telling the police about them. She felt horrible to assume

because she trusted Ben, but sometimes Beverly couldn't even trust *Richie* not to tell anyone their secret.

"No- No God no, he only ever tells me about you. He loves you guys, and it's eating away at him that he's the only- or he thinks he's the only one who knows" Mike explained, pacing up and down the kitchen before he remembered that they were supposed to be making coffee for everyone. "You need to tell all of them," he said, getting out a bunch of mugs. His hands were so shaky he felt like he was going to drop each of them on the floor.

Richie scoffed and started laughing humorlessly. "Easy for you to say, asshole. You aren't the one who's a fucking criminal here."

"Mike, we can't do that. It's bad enough that you know, and now that Ben knows? That's even worse. It's not fair on any of you," Beverly said, placing a hand on Richie's shoulder as he started to continuously run his hands through his hair nervously. Mike didn't know what to say.

They had been so invested in their conversation that they didn't notice the door open, and Ben walk in looking equal parts worried and pissed off. Mike turned and froze in his spot, and Beverly and Richie looked at him and for the first time in a long time they had no idea what to do or say. Not even Richie, who can't shut up in any situation, could form a sentence. Luckily, Ben was the first to start speaking.

"Mike... You know them?" Ben said, and the hurt in his voice made Beverly want to run up and hug him then and there, but she was too afraid to move. Mike approached Ben slowly, and he thought Ben was going to run away but instead he closed the door behind him and leaned up against it with his eyes closed. "This feels like a stupid R-rated drama movie." Only Richie laughed.

"Ben come sit down and let me explain," Mike said, and he felt like he was slurring his words because everything was happening so suddenly. Ben walked over and sat on the countertop next to Beverly, and she looked over and gave a sad smile and he gave an even sadder one back but that didn't stop her from placing her hand on top of his. He didn't move away. "Explain," Ben said, his voice so stern it didn't

sound like the Ben they knew. Mike took a deep breath, and started talking.

“A few days after I first saw Richie and Beverly they came back to steal more eggs from our coop. I caught them this time around, and they said they didn’t want any trouble and they’d put the eggs back. But I told them to keep them, because I could hear that they were our age and I felt bad because you’ve gotta be seriously desperate if you can’t even afford a packet of eggs from the shops,” Mike explained, and Richie started laughing until Beverly slapped him on the chest. “I told them they could come back whenever, and I would leave out stuff for them. So I did, and they told me their names, and I promised them I would never tell a soul about them because they always scared off foxes and stuff from our coops.”

“And good ol’ Mikey kept that promise” Richie said, a grin on his face. Beverly smiled a small smile, because even though she was annoyed at Mike right now he was the only person to ever help her and Richie out like that - she really did appreciate it.

She looked over at Ben to see his reaction. He didn’t look angry; he looked sad as he turned his head towards Beverly and he grabbed her hand and squeezed it tight. “Okay,” he said, and no other words were spoken as they heard Eddie call into the kitchen asking where the hell their coffee was. Richie shouted back, “Hold your horses Eds!” before he quickly looked at Ben and gave him a worried stare. “You won’t tell anyone, right?” and Ben nodded his head as though he felt offended that Richie would even ask. Richie smiled, and quickly ran out of the room with Ben following behind. Ben looked back at Beverly, who sat still on the counter, “I promise I won’t tell,” and Beverly nodded her head in a quiet thank you before Ben left the room and she helped Mike finish the coffee like she said she would.

For the rest of the day they sat in Mike’s living room, talking by the fire. Mike told them all about how his family had been living in Derry for centuries, and that he’d been homeschooled his entire life, and all of the Losers laughed at how lucky he was to escape Henry Bowers’ group. They spent the whole afternoon talking about this and that and making stupid jokes until they were all too tired to stay out any longer. Bill and Stan were the first to go, and Beverly and Ben followed quickly behind after both giving Mike a glance that meant a

thousand words, and he nodded back, knowing exactly what they were saying. Eddie and Richie stayed an extra hour talking to Mike about his cows - at least, Richie was, while Eddie was falling in and out of sleep on the sofa.

“Richie as much as I’d love to tell you the names of all my cows, I’m getting pretty tired and so is Eddie,” Mike said with a yawn so loud that it made Eddie jump. Richie laughed and ruffled the smaller boy’s hair, and Eddie was too tired to even respond. It was getting close to eleven now, so Richie got up and pulled the smaller boy with him and thanked Mike for the great time as he dragged Eddie outside with him.

“Come on Eddie Spaghetti, I’ll walk you home,” Richie said, walking his bike alongside him with Eddie sleepily doing the same. “You look more fucked than your mo-,” he started to say, but stopped instantly when Eddie shot him a mean glare and said,

“Beep beep Richie.” Richie laughed, and didn’t move his eyes away from Eddie as he continued slowly dragging his feet along the path. “I can’t believe you made me stay out so late,” Eddie said after a moment’s silence. “Mom always told me if I stayed out too late then those two ‘villains’ would come kill me.”

Richie burst out laughing, and Eddie chuckled under his breath because he knew it was stupid too. “Nah, I think you’re too cute for anyone to kill,” Richie said, and it was too dark for him to make out the blush that crept up onto Eddie’s cheeks. “Maybe there’s three of them,” Richie mused, looking over at Eddie to try and make out any kind of reaction. All Eddie did was shrug.

Throughout all the years Richie had known Eddie, Bill, and Stan, they never spoke about ‘Derry’s worst criminals yet’. Richie and Beverly’s actions had put them on newspaper headlines multiple times, and yet Richie barely heard anything about what the Losers thought about it. Sometimes Stan would say “did you hear about what happened last night?” and they would talk about it for five minutes and suddenly the topic of conversation would change. Richie was happy about it, sure, but he always did wonder what Eddie thought about it all. So when Eddie didn’t reply he continued and said,

“What do you think about all of that, Eds?” Eddie looked over at him with confusion, and shrugged his shoulders again. Eddie didn’t especially like thinking about it - the idea of people like *that* living in such a small town and not a single person knowing what they looked like terrified him. More than he was willing to admit. So instead he did a Richie, and made a light joke about it.

“People think they’re in love,” Eddie laughed, and was glad when Richie laughed too because he was worried Richie was actually looking for a proper answer. Which he was, but Richie couldn’t help but crack up at the thought of him and Beverly being *in love* .

“No way,” he said with a huge grin on his face, “I bet they’re both bi as fuck though.” Eddie chuckled lightly and said, with the roll of his eyes, “ *Sure*, Rich, and maybe they go to our school and they’ve fallen in love with their two best friends.” Eddie kept laughing, but Richie froze up and couldn’t speak for a moment because the irony of the situation was absolutely murdering him. Before Eddie could realise something was wrong, Richie just started laughing, and he knew it sounded a bit nervous but it didn’t matter because they were outside Eddie’s house now.

“Thanks for walking me home, trashmouth,” Eddie said, and Richie could just about barely make out his grin in the dark.

“It’s okay, Eds. Couldn’t risk having any of those damn criminals trying to hurt you,” Richie said with a chuckle, and Eddie said in response, “Oh please, you’re probably one of them,” before he rushed inside his house with a little wave. Richie was screaming on the inside, but waved Eddie away and as soon as he saw the smaller boy inside his house, and the light of his bedroom window turn on upstairs, he took out a cigarette from his backpack and instantly lit it up. Today had been far too stressful.

It took him a few more minutes to get home, but when he did he saw all of the lights on and his parents’ cars gone and he knew it was just about to get worse. He didn’t bother walking in as he turned his bike around, lit up another cigarette, and made his way to Beverly’s house.

3. It's Not Broken

Summary for the Chapter:

Richie and Beverly fuck up. Bad.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hooray for chapter threes! I never make it this far!
But I really like this fic! And I really like this chapter! Because it's my babies being badasses and angst!

Unfortunately with angst comes some warnings so:
WARNING: Brief mentions of self harm, implied child abuse, a teensy bit of violence

Enjoy!

Richie knew when his parents weren't home that he would have to find food himself. They hadn't been home in a few days, but considering all the lights in his house were on that meant they came back for something and left straight away. That, or his house was robbed, and he probably would've preferred that because at least it meant he was suffering for a reason. He didn't have to walk in to find out which it was; either way, there wouldn't be any food in the fridge. There was always food on the rare occasions that his mother and father were home, but none of it was ever for him. He only ever made the mistake of taking their food once, and he never did it again - not after what they did.

He could feel his stomach growling violently inside of his body, and because it was a habit now he stubbed his cigarette down onto his stomach and hissed as he felt the ash sizzle into his flesh. He didn't look down as he flicked the cigarette butt onto the ground; he knew it was just going to leave another scar. They always did. He made it to Beverly's house in under a few minutes, and he didn't have to climb up to her window or anything because she was already making her way down the drainpipe and onto the grass. She looked at him with a smile hidden underneath streams of tears, and he opened his

arms for her and she let out a quiet sob as she wrapped her arms around his neck and he wrapped his around her waist. They didn't have to speak about what happened because they both already knew, and they remained silent as the night as they rode to their familiar hideout on the edge of town.

It was an abandoned building - one no one really knew about because not even the curious kids of Derry would ever dare make it this far. Not even the police, on the nights they would spend hours searching for the two of them, ever made it here. It was the forgotten part of Derry, and that made it the perfect place to hide all of their stuff. On the roof of the building, hidden under a massive pile of debris, were two pairs of black masks and black shirts and bottoms that completely camouflaged them in the darkness, as well as platform boots that drastically increased their height. Mike told them how to improve their disguise after he caught them, and the shoes were apart of the upgrade. After they changed, Richie put contacts in, and they made his green eyes blue and they stung a little bit but it didn't really matter, and Beverly put in contacts that turned her light blue eyes dark brown. Next to the clothes were two backpacks and two baseball bats, and they picked them up with ease and left the building wordlessly, leaving their bikes hidden under two bushes and walking their way back into town.

"Where to, Bevv? I hear Davie's has restocked all their shit after last time we went," Richie said, and there was meant to be humor behind his words but he didn't laugh. Beverly stopped to think, swinging her bat around aimlessly as she did. She felt angry tonight. She wanted to break things and cry and maybe punch a few faces, and convenience stores and pharmacies weren't the place for that. So without a doubt in her mind she said, "Greta Keene," because all the anger she was feeling was now channeled into the fact that Greta's dad was a pervert and she tripped Beverly up in the hallway last monday and she still got to live a happier life than Beverly despite these things.

Richie nodded his head and together they walked to Greta Keene's house, stealthily making their ways through back gardens and alleyways so they wouldn't be caught. It was a Saturday, which meant Greta's mother and father would be working until 3am, and it was almost 1am now. All of the lights in her house were off, so they

jumped the fence into her garden and slowly approached the back door. Beverly went first, taking the lock pick set which she'd stolen one day from her father and using it to unlock the door. It opened with ease; Beverly had snuck into Greta's house enough times to feel confident about getting back in. Richie followed quickly behind, shutting the back door slowly until he heard it click, and then turning around and eyeing the kitchen with glee.

Beverly was almost about to head upstairs before Richie grabbed her hand and pulled her back. He whispered so lightly Beverly had to strain to hear him, "We can't split up." She sighed, and looked up at the ceiling impatiently because all she wanted to do tonight was let out her anger. She was glad Richie always managed to keep them in check. For a few minutes they raided the kitchen, taking everything Richie would need to keep himself alive for the next few days and everything Beverly just felt like taking. She really liked the cookies Mr. Keene would buy, so she took a packet of those and Richie had to stop himself from laughing as his best friend eyed them lovingly.

When they were done in the kitchen, they headed upstairs. Beverly knew where Greta's room was, and held her baseball bat tight in her hands as she approached the open door. She didn't want to hurt Greta, as much as Greta had kicked and punched her to the ground in all the years they'd known each other. She just wanted to scare the shit out of her and break everything in her room and *maybe* punch her in the face. That was all she wanted to do, but when they reached the door and Beverly snuck inside, she felt her heart freeze in her chest. Greta's bed was empty, and as though her life were a movie she suddenly felt like someone had pressed fast-forward because everything started to happen all at once.

She heard Greta scream from outside, and Beverly ran back into the hallway and watched as Richie, instinctively, swung his bat around and hit her in the side of the knee, causing the girl to collapse and start crying. Outside, they could see the headlights of a car pulling up into the house, and another person rushing up the stairs. Mrs. Keene appeared on the landing, screaming as she grabbed her phone and started to dial 911. Richie grabbed the phone in seconds and smashed it under his foot, and Beverly and Richie found themselves stuck as Mr. Keene entered the house and started coming upstairs. Beverly

grabbed Richie and pulled them both into the master bedroom because she remembered seeing a large window in there the last time she broke in. She locked the door behind them and opened the window and in seconds she threw herself out and into the bushes. Richie did the same, and bit his lip hard to stop himself crying out as a shot of pain ran up his leg from his ankle. Beverly helped him up, and hoisted him over the fence, and then they were running. Far from the street, far from Greta's house, far away from everything until they finally made it to safety.

It took half an hour to make it back to the roof of their hideout, and as soon as they reached the roof Richie tore off his mask and collapsed on the floor. His breathing was erratic and he started to see black spots in his vision - he wasn't sure whether it was the pain or the running, but he could feel himself starting to lose consciousness. Beverly took her mask off and threw it to the side, hastily rushing to Richie and tapping his face to keep him awake.

"Don't go dying on me trashmouth," Beverly chuckled dryly. She'd always hated seeing Richie in pain, but this time felt worse because she knew it was her fault. If she had just stayed calm and left when they got the food then Richie wouldn't be on the verge of passing out and they wouldn't have almost been caught. Richie laughed, and grabbed hold of Beverly's shaking hand and held it to his chest.

"First you push me into cow water, and then you break my fucking ankle. I feel like you're trying to kill me Bev," Richie laughed, and then groaned in pain as he pushed himself up to inspect his ankle. Beverly helped him, letting out a small giggle as he spoke. He always made situations easier to cope with. She helped him pull up the legs of his bottoms to reveal his ankles, and cringed as she saw that the right one was all swollen and bruised while the other was completely fine. There were no obvious lumps or bumps so it must've only been strained, but Beverly still felt awful, and Richie still felt like he was going to pass out.

"It's not broken," Richie said, and started taking off the black bottoms and shirt until he was just laying down in his boxers. Beverly didn't speak about the scars all over his body. Instead she did the same, and laid down next to him in her vest and shorts and looked up at the clear sky with him.

Richie had decided a long time ago that he didn't mind being in pain if it was for Beverly, because she was like his twin sister and anytime she needed him she would have him. So he didn't really mind that he wouldn't be able to walk on his ankle for a while, because it got Bev out of her shitty house for a few hours and it gave him the chance to fuck up Greta Keene in a way that would've got him suspended at school. He was actually pretty happy, and Beverly couldn't understand why he was smiling.

"You're a freak," she said, looking over at him and laughing when he gave her the middle finger. "Suck my ass," he replied, reaching into his bag and taking out the packet of cookies Beverly stole from the Keenes'. He gave her one, and placed one in his mouth.

"I thought that was Eddie's job," Beverly mumbled, her mouth filled with double chocolate chip goodness. Richie choked, and shot her a glare which just made her giggle like a little child. "What? I thought that's what you wanted," she added, batting her eyelashes and nudging the boy in the ribs. He scrambled away from her, laughing and swatting away her hand. They were like two little kids, teasing each other and messing around the way they were. Anyone would've thought they were siblings, and considering the circumstances they may aswell have been.

"I like Eddie but I don't think I want him sucking my ass," Richie grimaced, shoving another cookie into his mouth. "No, you just want him to cuddle you and kiss you and call you pretty all day long," Beverly sang mockingly, but really she thought it was cute because she'd always loved the idea of Richie and Eddie. They were cute together, and they cared about each other in ways people in love cared about each other, and Beverly approved of anyone that cared about Richie as much as she cared about Richie.

"Hell yeah," he said, and gave her a sly grin as he continued, "and you want the same from Bennyboy." Beverly punched him in the ribs, and he choked on another cookie, and they both laughed until their voices diminished into comfortable silence.

On nights like this they liked to pretend they were normal kids. That they were just sneaking out to go out with their best friend and they would go back home to loving families and go back to school and be

able to have happy relationships with the people they loved. They liked to talk about Eddie and Ben, and sometimes even gossip about Stan and Bill, because it made them feel like they were teenagers. Not criminals, not robbers, not wanted villains, just teenagers with normal teenager issues. No matter what happened they would never stop talking about Eddie and Ben because Richie and Beverly liked Eddie and Ben, and they would talk about them every day until they couldn't anymore because even though they knew it was hopeless, talking about it made it feel possible. Like, one day, maybe the two of them could be happy with the other two Losers. Maybe.

"You should go home before your father realises you're gone," Richie muttered, his tone suddenly sad. Any sentence that involved Beverly's father was always a bad sentence, and anytime Richie had to even mention the disgusting old man he felt like it left poison on his tongue. Beverly sighed, and nodded her head. She knew if he saw she was gone then things would get really bad.

"Let's go then, Rich. I'll take you home first," she said, standing up and offering her hand to the boy. Richie shook his head.

"I can't walk, it'll take too long." He gave her a weak smile, he was really tired now and couldn't bare the thought of moving anymore. "But Rich-" she started, but he raised his eyebrow and gave her a look and she knew she wasn't going to win this one.

"I'll come back in the morning, as soon as possible," she said, and quickly scurried around to hide everything under the debris and get changed into her old clothes. She quickly transferred all of their stuff into their normal backpacks, and leaned down to give Richie a little kiss on the cheek before she left. "I'll be back soon, don't die."

"Hey, I've got a man!" he called out to her as she hurried down the stairs, and he smiled wide when he heard her laugh and shout back, "Not yet, Tozier!" When her laugh disappeared, he closed his eyes and allowed sleep to drift him away.

He didn't know how he was going to explain his ankle to the Losers, and he didn't know what was going to happen with Greta and her family. Things like this had happened before, but today felt more dangerous. He couldn't escape the nagging feeling in his stomach that

told him Greta knew it was them. That she was telling the police it was them right now, and in the morning they would take him and Beverly away and they would never see Eddie or Ben or Stan or Bill or Mike ever again. Or maybe he was just being paranoid. Even still his sleep was filled with worries, and when morning came he woke up in a cold sweat and he wished more than anything that Eddie was the one waking him up instead of his nightmares.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hope ya'll liked that as much as I liked that :D
Shit's about to start getting real (;

4. I Need You Dumbass

Summary for the Chapter:

The Losers are getting scared, Ben gets involved, Eddie needs Richie, and Stan and Bill start suspecting.

Notes for the Chapter:

WOW this is a long ass chapter. I'm actually p happy with this so I hope whom'st'ever reads this is happy with it too :D Much love, homies <3 (Also leave comments, I need validation lmao)

The first thing Beverly did when she woke up the next morning was head back to the abandoned building. Her father didn't care that she left, just told her not to get involved with any boys and she walked out without a word as she took her bike and pedalled as fast as she could to Richie. She only just narrowly avoided the other Losers as she saw them all turn left to go down to the Barrens. Beverly kept going straight. She called up to Richie as soon as she arrived, dropping her bike onto the ground and running up the stairs to the roof without even waiting for a reply. When she got there, he was gone. All of his stuff was gone too, but when she checked underneath the debris their black outfits and shoes were still hidden. A note was left underneath one of the stones. It read 'Gone to Barrens' in Richie's scribbly handwriting, and she felt like she was going to kill him as she ran back down and grabbed her bike.

Richie had always been a very confusing person, even to Beverly and she'd known him for the majority of both of their lives. Sometimes Richie just did stupid things, and sometimes Beverly just really wanted to know why because more often than not it gave her a heart attack when he did. She didn't make it far into the forest leading towards the Barrens when she saw him. His bike was turned over on it's side and he was leaning up against a tree, smoking a cigarette with his eyes closed. She could see a bruise forming on his forehead. She called out to him, and he looked over at her with a bashful smile as her face showed relief, and then anger.

“What the fuck, Richie?” she said, glowering at him as she kneeled by his side and helped him up onto his feet. He hissed as he pressed his right foot down too much and opted instead to lean into Beverly’s side to ease the pressure on his ankle. It was more swollen now. Richie huffed in response; he didn’t really know how to explain why he left that building and decided it was a good idea to go to the Barrens by himself. He just did it, and didn’t really think about it until he lost his balance and crashed into a tree and knocked his head on the ground.

“They’ll be wondering where we are,” he said, leaving Beverly’s side to lift his bike back up. Beverly scoffed as he limped painfully towards his bike, so she stopped him and did it for him and he gratefully used it to keep himself upright as she grabbed her own bike and they started walking.

“You fucking worried me, don’t do that again,” Beverly grumbled, looking over at Richie and huffing in annoyance as he gave her a stupid grin. “Sorry, Bevv” he said, and all was forgiven as they started to hear their friends talking in the distance. As they got closer they could see them sitting around in a circle talking - all of them were there except for Mike. Richie stopped for a moment, looking at Eddie through the gap in the trees, and then over at Beverly in sudden panic.

“We’ll tell them you fell off your bike, it’s fine. Don’t worry,” Beverly said, and Richie took a deep breath in, and then out, and left the confines of the forest and out into the open of the Barrens. The Losers looked over and waved at them, their faces looking scared and serious, and that didn’t get any better as they saw Richie hobbling over towards them. Eddie was the first to rush over, taking Richie’s arm and placing it over his shoulder so he could keep the boy upright. The others followed quickly behind.

“Jesus, shit, Richie are you okay? What happened? Did-” Eddie started rambling, looking Richie up and down to scan his injuries. His eyes stopped on Richie’s ankle, and he cringed at how swollen and bruised it looked, and stopped again at Richie’s forehead, which sported a massive lump surrounded by a mix of blue and purple. Richie always looked like this; he couldn’t stop himself from falling and tripping over everything and getting himself into fights, it was

normal for them to see him bruised. But today it worried Eddie more than anything - it worried all of them - so he couldn't stop himself from speaking as every possible worry spilled out of his mouth like a fountain.

"Eds, breathe," Richie chuckled, fanning Eddie with his hand jokingly. Eddie grabbed his hand and held onto it for a moment, looking Richie in the eyes as he said, with a seriousness that had Richie scared, "Richard Tozier, what happened to you." Richie looked over at the other Losers, and they looked worried too as they stared between Richie's bruises and Beverly's confused face. Something was up, and Richie could feel his blood rushing all around his body because he had a feeling he knew why. Ben's calm but annoyed look only reinforced his suspicions.

"I fell off my bike and sprained my ankle, sheesh guys lighten up," Richie joked, and Beverly tried to laugh it off but the Losers weren't having any of it. Eddie still looked worried, and Bill looked ready to go full 'mom-mode' as he went to Richie's side and helped Eddie walk him over to where they had been sitting. Stan took Richie's bike, and walked it over to the other bikes in the corner with Beverly by his side.

"What's going on, Stan? Why's everyone so..." Beverly asked, but trailed off because she really didn't understand what was happening or why everyone was acting so weirdly. Beverly had a feeling she knew what was going on too, but she didn't want to believe it because *surely* word hadn't spread that quickly. Stan looked at her with a raised eyebrow as he dropped Richie's bike onto the ground. "You haven't heard?" he said, and Beverly shook her head in confusion and felt her heart sink. He sighed, and waved her over to go sit with the other Losers. Beverly thought she was going to throw up, but tried to keep herself calm as she nonchalantly followed behind.

Eddie didn't detach himself from Richie's side as him and Bill helped him sit down on the floor. They all sat around in a circle, no one daring to mention that Eddie was still holding onto Richie's hand because all of them, minus Beverly, had just listened to a whole half hour of him ranting about how worried he was about the trashmouth. Now wasn't the time to tease Eddie, they all had bigger things on

their mind.

“Richie, if... If something happened to you last night you have to tell us,” Stan said. Richie really wanted to tease him because Stan very rarely showed just how much he cared for him, but he was starting to get annoyed and impatient. He didn’t like it when people danced around what they were really thinking, he preferred when things were just said outright.

“Can you guys tell me what the fuck is going on? You’re all acting freaky, I just fell off my bike it’s not that big of a deal,” he said, squeezing Eddie’s hand tight. He didn’t want to seem too nervous. Bill had been searching through Eddie’s bag for something to patch up Richie’s ankle when he looked up and raised his eyebrow.

“D-Do neither of y-you know what happened l-last night?” he asked, pulling out a roll of bandages and surgical tape. Richie’s head was swimming too much to even question why Eddie had bandages in his backpack, he just stared at Bill with a blank face. Bill looked over at Beverly, and she gave him the same blank face as she sat fidgeting with the grass. Bill sighed as he sat in front of Richie and started putting the bandage over his ankle.

“Greta Keene got attacked last night,” Stan said. Richie and Beverly were too scared to glance at each other as they stared at Stan in mock-surprise. “She thinks it was a personal attack, cause she told the police they were walking into her room with.. With baseball bats.” They all looked terrified as Stan spoke, and Richie could feel Eddie shudder beside him. Greta lived close to all of them, so Richie could imagine the only thought that was going through all of their heads was that it could have been them. Richie and Beverly had never wanted to tell them the truth more.

“Shit,” Beverly muttered, glancing up for a moment at Ben. She felt like crawling into a ball and hiding from the earth when he saw his eyes full of disappointment and fear. It was hard enough to see that Ben was disappointed in her, but scared of her? That felt like a million knives stabbed into her back.

“W-When you didn’t t-turn up w-we thought you were... W-we thought t-they got y-you g-guys too” Bill stammered nervously, his

voice barely above a whisper. Beverly and Richie finally looked up at each other, and when they did they both felt like bursting into tears because *they* had done this. *They* were the monsters their friends were scared of, and they had fooled all of them enough to actually be worried about them.

They all stayed in silence for a while as Bill carefully wrapped Richie's ankle up. All of them had different thoughts racing through their minds, and the ones going through Richie's mind were starting to make him feel sick.

"I think I'm gonna head home, I don't think I'm feeling happiness today," Richie said, taking his hand away from Eddie's and pulling himself up using Eddie's shoulder. The other Losers stood up with him, Eddie instantaneously going back to his side to help him stand.

"I think.. M-Maybe none of us sh-should be alone right now," Bill said, and he walked over and grabbed his and Richie's bike, and Richie's backpack, so his friend wouldn't be weighed down while he walked. Everyone except Beverly and Richie agreed but they didn't say anything. They just followed wordlessly as they walked back to the streets and the Losers started talking in hushed voices about the criminals and what they wanted and who would be next. It took every ounce of strength in both Richie and Beverly's minds to stop themselves from telling them that they were the criminals and they would *never* hurt their friends, and that everything that they've done up until now was for a reason.

Ben didn't speak the entire time; he couldn't even look Richie or Beverly in the eyes as they walked by his side. He stayed completely silent until they had all gathered outside Bill's house, and were approached by two policeman who instantly gave Richie suspicious glares.

"What happened to you, son?" one of the policemen said, taking off his sunglasses and looking Richie up and down with a mean look in his eyes. They had been interrogating people all day, and the Losers were next. Richie stammered out the same excuse he gave the Losers, and Beverly stood strong by his side with a hand on his shoulder to calm him down. Eddie looked between the policeman and Richie, confused as to why Richie was so scared and why the policeman had

targeted him out of all of them.

“Are you sure that’s what happened, boy? I’m sure you all heard about those two thieves last night... Maybe you were one of the two who dropped out of the window?” the other policeman sneered, holding his baton threateningly in his hands. The Losers crowded around Richie, each of them glaring up at the policemen.

“You have no right to-” Stan started to say, but Ben cut him off and surprised all of them as he said, “I saw them last night, and Richie wasn’t one of them.”

The two policemen looked over at Ben and raised their eyebrows. Ben nodded his head, and without looking even a little bit scared he said “I live a few doors away from Greta and they ran through my garden when getting away.”

“This happened at 1 in the evening, what were you doing awake kid?” one of them interrogated, taking out his notepad and getting ready to scribble down whatever Ben said. The Losers just looked on confused, because Ben hadn’t mentioned to any of them about seeing anyone so why was he lying? Beverly knew exactly what he was doing, and all she wanted to do was grab him and cover his mouth and tell him to take it all back because he was doing the one thing Beverly and Richie didn’t want any of them to do. Get involved. She knew what would happen if they realised Ben was lying, and it would be ten times worse for him because she knew he would never tell them their true identities. If the police found out, Ben would be the first to be punished. She couldn’t stand the thought, but couldn’t bring herself to stop him.

“I got up to get a drink and saw them run through the garden, and I heard Mr. Keene shouting from his house” Ben said, and he sounded so convincing that Beverly was starting to think he was actually telling the truth, except she knew they didn’t go through Ben’s garden because they went right around his fence.

“Right, and how are you so certain that your friend here wasn’t one of them?” Beverly was just about to snap and tell him to back off, but Ben placed a comforting hand on her back and answered the policeman calmly.

“Because Richie’s limping, and neither of them were limping when they ran through my garden. And both of them were really tall, and muscular, and Richie is just lanky.” The policeman took note of everything Ben said, and with one last suspicious look at Richie he grabbed his partner and thanked Ben for his time, and then both policeman walked off. The Losers stayed quiet for a moment, watching Ben as he scratched the back of his neck sheepishly and let out a deep sigh.

“You should come to Mike’s with me, Bev. Bill’s right, none of us should be alone right now,” Ben finally spoke, and turned on his heel and started to walk down the street and Beverly quickly tagged along with a confused “okay.” Only Beverly looked back as the Losers watched them leave.

“What the actual fuck,” Richie blurted out, but he was confused for different reasons. He knew Ben was lying for their sake, but he couldn’t think why. Ben had only known them for a few months, and sure, Richie knew the boy had a crush on Beverly, but crushes aren’t enough to put yourself at risk like that. Of course, he knew he would’ve done the same for Eddie if roles were reversed, but it still confused him. At the back of his mind, he couldn’t think why anyone as nice as Ben would protect people as... awful, as him. The remaining three didn’t know how to reply - everything felt weird and different and all they wanted to do was not think about it.

“S-Stan, you w-wanna stay round?” Bill asked, and Stan flushed red and nodded his head. Richie gave a little aww, and Eddie elbowed him lightly in the ribs. Bill’s face went completely red as he gave Richie a glare in return.

“S-Stay safe,” he said to the two, handing Richie his bike back, and the two boys nodded their heads as Bill and Stan dropped their own bikes on Bill’s front lawn, and escaped inside. Richie and Eddie stood watching Bill’s door for a moment until Eddie spoke.

“I’m fucking scared, Richie.” Eddie’s voice sounded so small and worried that Richie couldn’t help himself as he squeezed Eddie tight to his side and rested his cheek on top of the smaller boy’s head. “We’ll be okay, Eds.”

“Don’t call me that,” Eddie said, and Richie laughed and turned to head towards his house. All he wanted to do was sleep for the rest of the day, but Eddie grabbed his arm and stopped him before he could hobble any further. “Richie, you heard what Bill said. You’re staying round my house tonight.” Richie rolled his eyes and gave the smaller boy a grin.

“I’d love to Eds but I’ve got loads of chicks waiting for me at home.” Eddie laughed sarcastically as he grabbed Richie’s bike and started walking in the direction of his house. Richie nearly lost his balance as he called out, “Woah, woah, woah, Eds, what are you doing?”

“I need you, dumbass.”

Richie stopped in shock, feeling a blush rising up his cheeks and warming up his face. He hated the way Eddie could say something so innocent and so platonic and he would be melting into the floor and screaming on the inside. He hated it, but he loved it, so he didn’t question him as he limped faster to catch up. “Love you too, Eds,” he said with a stupid high-pitched voice, and Eddie laughed a genuine laugh and continued walking with Richie by his side.

Eddie’s mother wasn’t home when they made it to Eddie’s house, so it was easy for him to hide Richie’s bike in one of the bushes in the back garden and sneak him in through the back door. He wouldn’t make the same mistake of letting anyone in through the front door again, not after one of his neighbours ratted him out to his mom the next morning. He figured it would’ve been okay, if it was just Bill or Stan or Ben because they were “respectable young lads”, but on that particular day it was Beverly and Richie and his mother *hated* them with a passion. He got grounded for a while after that. It was worth it though, because Eddie still lovingly remembers that every day of being cooped up in his room Richie would climb up the tree next to his house and sneak in through Eddie’s window (he always left it open for him) and spend somewhere between a few minutes and a few hours just keeping him company. The others did the same every time Eddie was grounded, and he loved having such amazing friends, but when Richie did it, it made his heart explode. Even when he was just letting Richie in normally, it made him feel things he never felt with any of the other Losers.

They both headed upstairs straight away, and by the time they made it to Eddie's room Richie was exhausted and instantly collapsed into his soft bed and curled himself up in all the blankets and pillows that covered it. Whenever it got cold, Eddie's mother always insisted that Eddie had at least 3 blankets on his bed and near enough 10 pillows so he wouldn't get sick. It was the one thing Richie actually liked about Eddie's mom, but everything else sort of let her down. The fact that Eddie had to lock his bedroom door and put a chair up against it showed just how much of an awful person she was: she'd gotten worse as Eddie grew older, and Richie hated her with every fibre of his being. But her need to keep Eddie unbearably warm during the cold seasons? He liked that.

"No offence Richie but you smell like shit. Why are you still wearing the clothes Mike lent you yesterday?" Eddie said, pulling off Richie's shoes and cringing at how dirty they were. His socks weren't any better, but even still he pulled them off Richie's feet and threw them to the side. Richie hissed from the pressure it put on his ankle, and tried to kick Eddie away from his feet, but that just bent it in a weird way and he screamed into the pillow. Eddie sighed, and sat down by Richie's side.

"You're not sleeping in my bed until you have a shower." Richie groaned loudly and pushed himself up off the bed, but couldn't stop himself from giving Eddie a little smile because even though he hated being nagged he liked that Eddie cared about him. Even if Eddie's way of caring meant telling him he smelt like shit, and forcing him to move even though he was tired and in pain.

He limped over to the bathroom with Eddie by his side, holding a pile of fresh clothes and towels, and watched as he got the water ready. Eddie always insisted on getting the water ready whenever Richie stayed around and had a shower (because the boy was always "fucking disgusting", as Eddie put it), and Richie loved it because it was always the perfect temperature. But today, as soon as Eddie left and Richie locked the door behind him, he made the water piping hot. It burnt his skin as soon as he stepped in, and made the newly forming blister on his stomach sting like crazy. But today he felt dirty - inside and out - and he needed to feel like the water was getting rid of every piece of grime and filth on him. The water turned brown as

it went down the drain and for a second he thought he was seeing red until he squeezed his eyes shut and opened them again, and he realised he was just seeing things. He didn't know how long he spent in there, scrubbing at his skin until it was red raw, but it was long enough for Eddie to knock on the door and ask if he was okay.

"Come back later Eds, I'm busy with your mom!" Richie called out with a laugh, and he could almost feel the glare Eddie must have been giving him through the door. He told him to hurry up before he walked away, and Richie stood still underneath the water for a few moments before walking out. He still felt dirty, but he knew no matter how long he stayed underneath the water it couldn't get rid of how filthy he felt on the inside. So begrudgingly, he stood out of the shower and pushed all those thoughts away as he got dressed into the clothes Eddie had given him. Richie had been round so many times that Eddie somehow ended up with a whole pile of Richie's clothes, and Richie was happy he didn't throw any of them away because he couldn't bare to squeeze himself into Eddie's clothes. With a deep breath, he composed himself and walked back towards Eddie's room.

Meanwhile, at Bill's house, Stan and Bill rushed upstairs after having lunch with Bill's parents. His parents had been talking about what happened with Greta Keene, and were lecturing the two boys about how careful they had to be. As soon as they were free from the conversation, the two boys locked themselves in Bill's room and Bill threw down his and Richie's bag on the floor and groaned as his shoulders started to ache. Stan raised an eyebrow at him as he sat at Bill's desk.

"You forgot to give Richie his bag back," he pointed out, and Bill started massaging his shoulders as he eyed Richie's bag curiously.

"Y-Yeah. It's r-really h-heavy," he said, picking up Richie's bag and giving it to Stan, who almost dropped it on the floor. It felt like he was holding a bag of stones, and he couldn't help but wonder why it was so heavy. He was just about to open it up to see when Bill stopped him.

"We sh-shouldn't look th-through Richie's stuff" he said, but he couldn't deny that he wanted to know what the hell Richie had in there. Richie found it difficult bringing in a single pen at school, so

whatever was in his bag must have been important. Stan shrugged his shoulders, and opened the bag anyways.

He didn't speak as one by one he took out packets upon packets of food. Bill stared at them, suddenly feeling his stomach drop as Stan just kept taking out more and more.

"S-Stan you d-don't t-think..." he said, but he couldn't bring himself to finish the sentence because there was *no way in hell* that this was the food stolen from Greta Keene's kitchen. Richie was a troublemaker, sure, and he did stupid things, but this? There had to be an explanation for this: but Bill couldn't think of anything. Because even though none of them had ever met Richie's parents they were all smart enough to know that they weren't the best, and Richie didn't have a job, so the likelihood of him having this much food for a proper reason was very low.

"I don't know what to think, Bill.. But whatever the hell this is, I think Richie's gotten himself into some deep shit this time... and we have to help." Bill couldn't agree more, and so he helped Stan pack up the bag and in minutes they were rushing back out of Bill's home and heading towards Mike's farm. If anyone was going to know what was going on with Richie, it would be Beverly.

5. I'm Not Hiding Anything

Summary for the Chapter:

Bill and Stan's suspicions grow, Ben threatens to tell, and Eddie's mom knows.

Notes for the Chapter:

Enjoy bbys! <3

Eddie was half asleep at his desk when Richie walked back into his room. His arm was propped up onto the wooden surface, and he was resting his chin in his hand with his eyes closed. He'd been staring out of the window while Richie was away, keeping an eye out for his mom because he had no clue when she would be home. Richie tried closing the door quietly, but the small click of it shutting behind him made Eddie jump out of his seat. Richie put his arms up and said, "Just me," and Eddie sat back in his seat with a sigh of relief. He felt on edge, and even though having Richie in his house made him feel better it didn't stop him from being nervous. Richie limped over to Eddie's bed and sat down, looking at Eddie with worry.

"What's up, Eds?" Richie said, and he felt stupid asking because he knew what was up with Eddie probably more than Eddie knew what was up with Eddie. Eddie shrugged his shoulders and looked down at Richie's ankle, rolling his eyes because the boy had forgotten to take off the bandage before getting in the shower and now it was dripping water everywhere. He got up and sat by Richie's feet, taking out the first-aid kit underneath his bed that he always kept for when Richie came round injured. Last time, his knuckles had been bruised and cut up because he got into a fight with Henry Bowers after school, and Eddie spent a good twenty minutes making sure they weren't broken and that the cuts weren't infected. The first-aid kit had been used for Richie more than it had ever been used for Eddie.

"I thought I told you to take this off," Eddie berated, moving Richie's leg so his foot was resting on Eddie's knee. He slowly started unwrapping the bandage, marvelling at how well Bill had wrapped it up. They'd all been in a situation where they had to look after Richie,

or in some instances one of the other Losers if they got brutally beaten the shit out of by Bowers' group. They were all practically first-aid professionals now.

"I wasn't listening," Richie said, taking in a sharp breath as Eddie gently started touching the bruised area. The skin was all wrinkled from the wet bandage and the whole area looked swollen to hell, but Eddie didn't look too worried so he figured he must've been right when he told Beverly it wasn't broken. Eddie took one of his blankets from his bed and used it to dab Richie's ankle dry before he started applying a new bandage.

"You would be a good doctor, Eds," Richie said, amazed at how Eddie didn't mess it up once. Eddie laughed in response, "If you came in my room with a fever I would throw you out of the window, but thanks." Richie kicked him gently with his other foot and laughed. They both knew that wasn't true.

Last December Richie's parents hadn't paid their heating bills, leaving Richie freezing cold in the house with only a few tattered blankets to keep him warm. It hadn't mattered to them, because they spent that month on a holiday retreat for Christmas and conveniently left Richie behind. They said they didn't have enough money to take him, but they had enough money to stay on their holiday for an extra two weeks after Christmas. Being in the cold for so long, Richie eventually came down with an awful fever that had him barely able to move and throwing up everything that he tried to eat. Somehow he'd managed to drag himself out of bed and through the snow to get to Eddie's house, and as soon as Eddie heard him throwing rocks at his window he let him in even though it was 4 in the morning and his mom was asleep in the next room. Eddie had been too worried about the boy to care that he started throwing up in his bin and then passed out on his floor as soon as he came in. Eddie kept Richie in his bed for a whole week, spending the whole time feeding him warm soup and bringing him tissues and cleaning up his puke. Eddie had a soft spot for Richie; he knew that, and Richie knew that, but Richie didn't bother reminding him because he was sure Eddie hadn't forgotten.

"You're my favourite doctor, Eddie Spaghetti" Richie said, leaning over and pinching Eddie's cheek when he was done. Eddie swatted his hand away and flicked his nose, "That's Dr. Kaspbrak to you,

good sir.”

“Doctor Spaghetti,” Richie said, looking like he’d had a sudden epiphany as the words came out of his mouth. Eddie rolled his eyes as Richie burst out laughing, falling back on the bed and holding his chest as he giggled to himself. He was exhausted and his mind was running low on energy, which probably explained why he was having such a big laughing fit. Eddie laughed and threw a pillow at Richie’s head,

“Go to sleep you moron,” he said, trying to hide the fact that butterflies were fluttering around in his belly as he watched his best friend laugh. He looked so happy, and Eddie liked seeing Richie happy. Richie continued laughing for a good few minutes, until his laughter diminished into little giggles and then suddenly he was snoring lightly. Eddie picked up Richie’s legs gently and moved them around so he was laying properly on his bed, and then placed a pillow underneath his sprained ankle. Then he walked over to his door, locked it, placed a chair underneath the handle, and walked over to his radio and started playing some soft music.

He didn’t want to disturb Richie, so after he locked all of the windows and turned off the lights he sat in his desk chair and started dozing off as *‘All my Loving’* played on the radio.

The sun was starting to set when Stan and Bill made it to Mike’s farm. Mike was sitting on the grass outside his house with Ben and Beverly by his side; Beverly was making a crown out of flowers while Ben and Mike watched in awe. Stan called out to them, and they looked up with confusion as the two boys rushed up to them out of breath. Bill dropped Richie’s bag in front of Beverly, and Beverly looked up more confused than before.

“Where d-did R-Richie g-get all of t-this s-stuff,” Bill asked, panting as he tried to catch his breath. Beverly opened up the bag and felt her heart stop as she looked inside. It was the food that they had stolen from Greta’s house, she’d completely forgotten that she put it all in there last night. She didn’t say anything as Bill and Stan sat down with them, looking at her in anticipation. Ben and Mike looked at each other, not knowing what to say to help.

"I-I.. I don't.. I don't know," Beverly whispered, running her fingers through her hair shakily as she stared at the bag. She was starting to panic. She could handle Mike knowing, and she could just barely handle Ben knowing, but if Bill and Stan found out that meant Eddie would have to find out and then suddenly all of the people she loved - the only people in her life she's *ever* loved - would be put in danger.

"Bev, if you're hiding something for Richie.. You have to tell us, we're his friends too and you know we wouldn't want anything to happen to him," Stan said, placing a gentle hand on her knee. His eyes were soft, and genuine, but Beverly didn't have to look up to know he was telling the truth. But she couldn't do this. She couldn't throw Richie under the bus. If he was going down, she was going with him. So she shook her head, and closed the bag.

"I'm not hiding anything," she said, and Stan sighed and so did Bill because they both knew she was lying.

"Yes you are, Bev," Ben spoke up, his voice frail and shaky. He felt awful the moment he started speaking, and when Beverly looked up with betrayal in her eyes he just wanted to run away and never finish his sentence. Mike kept his eyes downwards.

"You have to tell them the truth, Bev... or I will," Ben stammered. Beverly felt anger pile up in her chest as she stood up, grabbed Richie's bag, and backed away from the group.

"No.. No, you promised me," she spat, and Bill and Stan stared between the two in confusion and Mike still kept his eyes down because he couldn't bare to hear this. He couldn't believe Ben was doing this, but he was glad he was because Bill and Stan loved Beverly and Richie so it was only right for them to know.

"Beverly ple-" he started, but she didn't stay to hear him finish as she grabbed her bike and pedalled fast down the dirt path away from them. All of them called her name, but she didn't look back as she disappeared into the horizon.

"B-Ben.. What's g-going on?" Bill said, his voice ridden with fear. He was starting to connect the dots, but he didn't know what the end picture was going to look like. Everything felt confusing and he was

assuming so many things, and all of it led to Richie being at Greta's house last night. If Beverly wasn't going to say anything then they had to confront Richie. Ben didn't respond as he looked sadly towards where Beverly's silhouette had disappeared.

"We need to find Richie," Stan said, and grabbed Bill and started running. Mike and Ben followed quickly behind as they ran down the dirt path towards Eddie's house. They knew he was going to be there.

The sun had set and night was starting to fall on the town of Derry when Richie woke up, curled up in a wooly blanket in Eddie's bed. For a moment he was lost, waking up looking at a ceiling that wasn't his and hearing music on a radio he didn't own. It wasn't until he saw Eddie asleep at his desk that he remembered that Eddie had forced him to come round. He felt too comfy to move, but as he saw that it was starting to get dark outside he figured it was about time to go. So, quietly, he got up and started searching the room for his bag. Eddie's room was neat so he should've seen it straight away, except he didn't. He mouthed a 'what the fuck' to himself but didn't start panicking just yet because he must've left it in the bathroom.

He limped over to the door and unlocked it, putting the chair aside and stepping out into the hallway. He almost fell backwards as he saw Sonia Kaspbrak, Eddie's mother, looking at him with her arms crossed. She grabbed his arm and pulled him away from Eddie's room, not caring at all that Richie was hopping on one leg trying to keep up with her.

"Get the fuck off me!" Richie said quietly, his voice sharp as he grabbed her wrist and dug his nails into her skin. She hissed, and dropped his arm.

"I know what you've done, I saw you limping down those streets last night," she said, looking at him with a glare and a crude smile on her face. Richie froze. She didn't give him time to reply as she sneered, "If you keep coming near my boy, I'll tell him. I'll tell everyone." Richie wanted to punch the smug look right off her face, but instead he smiled. He would've been scared if it wasn't her. Sonia Kaspbrak was a delusional old hag, and everyone in Derry thought that. They would've never believed her, and he told her that straight. She looked like she was about to push him down the stairs.

“Eddie will,” she said, the smug smile still plastered on her face as she spoke. Richie laughed maliciously under his breath, and looked up at her with confident eyes.

“No, he won’t. And you know what? He’ll still let me in no matter how much you try to stop him. And if I hear that you’ve said one word about this to him, I will come into your room while you sleep and I will kill you.”

Sonia stepped back, her eyes actually full of fear. Richie didn’t know how she believed him, it was all bullshit and he couldn’t believe he actually said any of it. He wanted to laugh at himself for being so serious, but he kept his mean composure as she stepped away from him. He wanted to scare her more; he really needed to check their bathroom for his bag and she was blocking the way. A voice calling him from outside stopped him from saying anymore.

“Richie! Richie get the fuck out here, now!” the voice said, and Richie automatically knew it was Beverly and that something was wrong. He didn’t hesitate as he rushed downstairs and out of Eddie’s house. Beverly was stood there, tears down her face as she sat on her bike with his backpack in her hand. It took him a moment to remember he left it with Bill.

“Bev, what-” he started, but she threw his bag at him and told him they needed to go before he could finish his sentence. He looked behind him and saw Eddie’s mother watching them from the door, and he looked up and saw the light in Eddie’s room turn on.

“Shit,” he muttered, and rushed over to grab his bike from the bush Eddie had hidden it in. He was sockless and barefoot, but he didn’t care. If Beverly said they had to go, then they had to go. Adrenaline had kicked in and he almost didn’t feel the pain in his ankle as he quickly threw on his bag and pedalled fast behind Beverly as she led the way down the street. Straight towards their hideout.